Osho
The Great Nothing
Darshan Diary
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Interview with Ajit

Ajit: A friend of mine who was a Jain mentioned that there was a person called Acharya Rajneesh, who gave wonderful talks. I was very averse to anyone asking me to follow a particular path, so at first I just neglected to go. But when he insisted, I decided to go and listen to this person.

The first talk I heard, I said to myself. "This person has something tremendous to convey." He attacked tradition, saying, "Whether it's a military uniform or a sannyas uniform makes no difference at all! You're all imitating, your all following." And that was what I had come to believe also, because being brought up traditionally to follow certain things blindly, my mind was revolting.

Thereafter I kept on listening to Osho every year whenever he came to Poona. That in itself was so much of an attraction, that I remember the days when I had to miss my hospital work because of his talk's.

People around me began to feel that I had become almost a fan of this Rajneeshji.

We used to meet Osho at Manikbhai's residence, and I distinctly remember of asking Osho "What you say appeals to me, but how does one achieve it?" He just smiled and kept quiet and wouldn't say anything. I had an acute ulcer at that time, so I said, "Won't you tell me something about the diet one should follow ?"I wanted specific

instructions, but he just smiled and said, "Yes, we will talk about it sometime later." On another occasion I told him, "I am very very keen on doing some sadhanas, so why don't you talk on all those methods so that I can choose? He smiled and said, "Yes, we will." Now, looking back, it appears that I was so eager and the urge was tremendous, and inside I was feeling that he was avoiding and I was thinking, "Why don't you come out and tell us to do something?" But now I realize that maybe even if he had told me at the time, it would have been impossible for me to grasp it then.

Ajit described his and his family's reaction to the first camp they attended where they first saw dynamic meditation being done…

Ajit: It was a tremendous jolt to me. I said, "This is something unheard of!" I'd never seen anything like It-People crying and going naked, but having read almost everything that had been published by Osho for the past six years, I was deeply convinced that their must be some meaning in this madness, even if I couldn't get it right away. But I had a hard time persuading my family to stay -and it was perfectly right for them to think that this was all madness, because personally I thought so to, but there was something deeper that said this was not only madness.

Ajit saw Osho in person and said he was having trouble getting into the meditations. Osho said he should meditate away from his family as they were a disturbance to him-which he did the following day, and found the energy really began to move dramatically.

Ajit's family were unable to reconcile themselves to Osho, but nevertheless, in the following months, Ajit continued to attend camps and lectures whenever he could.

Maneesha: What was Osho beginning to mean to you by now? Did you see yourself as a follower or still as someone who was just interested?

Ajit: No, I was literally trying to grasp something from him. My whole attitude was that this man has something-and I'm interested in it! I will be with him and I will try to possess it. That was the whole

attitude.

He was not known at that time as a Bhagwan, neither did I take him as a Bhagwan or anything even very highly spiritual. I was tremendously attracted firstly but his oratory, the calm confidence with which he conveyed whatsoever he wanted to, and every word of what he said went deeply into me. Everything he said seemed to be true, and whatsoever he was saying I had also to experience. I looked to him only as a person, and to put it more or less crudely, I wanted to use him as a means to the end I was imagining.

The next camp I attended was in "71,"it was a ten day camp. Prior to that I had seen him once or twice in Bombay. In my home trouble had started arising because they thought that I was running away to the camps and they thought, "He is no longer interested in the family or the profession." And my inward feeling also at that time was that all this professional life and this and that really has no meaning.

Had it been in the olden day sand had circumstances been slightly conducive, looking back, I feel I would have run away from home. So in this frame of mind I went to Mount Abu For the eight day camp, and their in the first talk in the evening Osho said that he wanted to start initiating people.

He had already started the previous September. I had heard casually that he had started giving sannyas and my inward urge was to take it, but then I wasn't really ready. At the talk at Abu he said he wanted to initiate people in white also. I thought, "This is the chance for me- because I wasn't prepared to be in orange, but being a doctor I used to be mostly in white, so I said, "It's a good excuse for me-this is okay."

On the same day I went and said," I would like to take sannyas." He said, "OK," and then put the mala on me and gave me my name.

Maneesha: Were some people being initiated into orange or was everyone in white?

Ajit: No, at that time actually he used to have three grades. At Abu

he started with two. One he used to call a straight sannyasin- sadhus. I actually started with Sadhu Ajit Saraswati. And the expectation was that you would wear only white and then put the mala on the outside. Those who were initiated into orange were swami's. About a year later In Poona he even started initiating people in their usual dress, just with a mala on top.

He said, "I would like people to start from anywhere because I know that once they know, they will change from one to the next. People who are not ready to wear orange will delay unnecessarily, whereas if I initiate them into white, from white they will come to orange." That's what happened in my case.

First I used to put the mala inside because I didn't want to show it to people. Then, after a few months, I started wearing it outside with white dress. Then, whenever I used to meet him in between, he used to say casually that gradually I should changed to orange; partly, once in awhile, to start putting on orange at home. But I couldn't get up the courage. Then I attended more camps, and in January "73" I attended the Abu camp, and that more or less completely changed me.
I said, "Whatever happens now, I am not going to bring my mind in. Whatsoever he says, I am going to do. "So in April "73" I went to Bombay and conveyed the message that I wanted to take full sannyas. I went out and bought an orange kurta and the next day I got initiated into swami, but even then I couldn't make myself bold enough to wear the full orange.

The people at home had become completely resigned to fact that, "This person is a goner now, so it's best not to…" [laughter] in the meantime something that did help them reconcile themselves to it was the fact that I had come to realize that what he was teaching or what he was asking us to do was not something against my being in the family, being in a profession. The people at home realized that, "He is doing some sadhana in the morning-shouting and dancing and everything-but throughout the day he's quite normal, "Throughout the day I was working at the hospital, doing operations, conducting the deliveries, and I was with my children, so they felt, "He is not leaving; he is not going out of the home."

In " 74,the year that Osho came to Poona, we were returning from Abu and I was in the same railway compartment as Osho. Early in the morning as the train entered the railway station I entered his compartment, just to say, "I am leaving." So as I bent to touch his feet he just looked at me in my white trousers and my orange kurta and he said, "You'd be better to change into the whole orange because it is not only the dress that is divided- the mind is divided."

You know, whenever I've spoken to him, he has always just spoken one or two sentences at the most, but they have been almost like an arrow going so deep. So as soon as I got back I ordered full dress. Much against the wishes of the world and my family to, I began to wear full orange. Since then many things have really been happening.

Maneesha: was he referred to as Bhagwan at the time he began to initiate people, or earlier.

Ajit: He started initiations in 1970,and the first time I came to know about his being called Bhagwan was in 1970, before I was initiated. And then, as with everything that he has done, my mind again avoided, and I wasn't prepared to call him Bhagwan because funnily enough, even to this day, whenever I look at him, nothing really stirs. But when I close my eyes or when I am listening to his voice or when I am with him internally, many things happen. But physically in his presence, I feel terribly upset; this I have told him many times.

Suppose you go and ask me to sit with him or be with him…As a Doctor I've had occasion to be with him for short times-I feel terribly nervous. I don't know why but it always happens.

In the beginning also I never imagined that he was a Bhagwan. The way he was, was immaterial, but he was a tremendous attraction to me. I wanted to be near him, with him, but I wanted to avoid looking into his eyes directly. Whenever he looked into my eyes I felt terribly shaken.

In " 72"it came out in the Mahrathi newsletter that he was now

Bhagwan Rajneesh–and I was not prepared to call him Bhagwan. I tried to defend myself at the time with others who were around me, saying that some people call him Bhagwan, but it's as good to call him Acharya–why call him Bhagwan? But then he was asked these questions [as to why he was being called Bhagwan] and he started giving explanations, and then I realized the meaning of the word.

By that time I had attended a few more camps and the realization started happening to me also that there is really something divine–he is not just a human being as we would ordinarily think him him to be.

Maneesha: You had not thought of him as enlightened when he was your Acharya?

Ajit: The first ray of light that occurred to me that he was really enlightened was in 1972 at the Ananda Shila camp where he spoke on the seven steps of samadhi–it was Madam Blavatsky's book "Secret Doctrine" . At that time for the first time, listening to him in the talks I started feeling that what ever he has been saying…I had been convincing myself that he's got a great intellectual capacity and he's got a tremendous grasp of things, but at this camp I thought that his just being human is not possible–it is something beyond. Then suddenly I realized that he is not just an intellectual giant or a personality or a philosopher or a this or a that–he is really an enlightened person. Till then, actually, I didn't know what enlightenment was. But listening to him, I felt a real Bhagwan for the first time.

That was also the time when I started feeling–as I feel many times now–that I don't see him as a body at all. When I am in his physical presence, something which I don't feel or see starts coming in between; that is why I feel uneasy.

Maneesha: Because you have to relate to him as a person and you don't really feel that he is.

Ajit: My body relates to his body and that creates a lot of disturbance. That is why in the lectures I never sit right in front of him, but always

at the side because then I can forget his physical body.

Thats one of the questions some time back I had written to him-that it is both painful and sweet, the experience I am having. I said that it's painful to see you their no more, but at the same time It's sweet to see you everywhere, because his Presence-be sure to put a capital "P." -I feel everywhere. But his physical presence may be acts as a hindrance to that feeling, or may be, as he says, the gestalt changes. In his physical presence I lose the other Presence.

Maneesha: You mean there cant be the form and the formless simultaneously?

Ajit: Yes. But in '72 I really started feeling him as an enlightened being and that gave me courage to take sannyas in '73.

Maneesha: One of the reasons why I wanted to talk to you was because your an Indian and mostly I've been talking to Westerners. To Westerners the concept of enlightenment embodied is rather foreign, but I thought that perhaps to the Indian consciousness it would be more acceptable. Yet a lot of Indians object to the fact that he is called Bhagwan and don't accept that he's enlightened.

Ajit: As far as that question is concerned, I would rather be classified as a Westerner because I never thought, right from the beginning, that any person could be a god. Perhaps that is the reason that made me revolt and become almost an atheist.

Maneesha: Was your family Hindu?

Ajit: Hindu- Brahmins. My father was a terribly religious person and almost every day we used to have puja and worshipping and umpteen images and gods. I never really felt at ease with them. I was never reconciled to the fact that these images had anything in them as such or that anything could be got through them-they appeared to me to be just myths. Therefore I I could never accept the fact in the beginning that Rajneesh was a Bhagwan in the sense that God had entered his body or anything like that, because at that time my idea

of God was very vague, and I didn't exactly know what it meant.

But the I heard him, and the more I started experiencing depth in meditation, the more I could get some idea as to what enlightenment is.

Then once I got the feeling off a tremendous expanse filling the whole, and that one could experience and that expansiveness still being in the body, I was convinced that this had happened to this man. The way he speaks made me think that whatsoever he is saying has really happened to him. Then I didn't have any hesitation in calling him Bhagwan, because I realized that Bhagwan is not a restrictive word. And than realization came to me that it is not he alone who is Bhagwan, that divinity is not in embodied in him only, but that divinity is present everywhere-and one can experience that.

Maneesha: Could you talk about changes you feel you've gone through since becoming a sannyasin?

Ajit: Oh, they're fantastic! The ease that comes in one's life in all aspects-in eating, in dressing, and especially in my professional life. I was a very tense person, very anxious a lot of the time. But the ease that was attained through the morning meditation was carried through the day. And the whole attitude to life, in everything that one does, really makes a lot of difference.

There's another aspect of sannyas which has brought a great change in my life. I have always loved teaching. You know, I was a professor, and even more than the practical part, I'd been extremely interested in teaching students. So when I started gathering knowledge from Osho, whatsoever I had learned I wanted to tell people. But in the beginning it was difficult because there was no experience-it was only verbal, intellectual knowledge. I remember when I was called into address meetings at certain Lions Clubs and Rotary clubs, I had to make a lot of preparation; I would take notes. I still remember the jitters that I had during the talk!

But gradually, as meditation deepened, I found a secret-that there was

nothing I had to prepare. I could just go and be, and it would start flowing. If I am talking to a group of people-for example as I'm talking to you right now-I can go on for hours together. Actually I have been to some meetings where I talked to a group of Rotarians, Lions and Medical people for five hours at a stretch!

Maneesha: About Osho?

Ajit: About Osho, about sannyas, about enlightenment, about sadhana and about Dynamic meditation. Five hours continuously talking, and at the end there was a feeling of tremendous exhilaration.- the body felt light and terrifically healthy-the mind was absolutely clear.

One of the reasons I think the pain persists in me [Ajit had said earlier he suffered from chronic upper abdominal pain for which their seemed to be no physical cause] is because something in me wants to shout and tell the whole world of what I have got. Not having attained the ultimate, there is a little conflict also, but the tremendous urge within is there, and that's why I am always waiting for someone to invoke me.

More opportunities are there now because many people come in the evenings and we sit around and talk, and I have been going to many groups in Poona and outside also giving talks. Sometime back I asked Osho also that many people ask me to talk and I don't know if I'm qualified or if I should. But Osho told me, "Whatsoever you know, say! As long as your not posing, you're not saying some thing about which you yourself don't know,: go and talk."

Maneesha: Do your patients express interest?

Ajit: Oh, yes. Actually some of my patients have become sannyasins. And it's unplanned-unplanned in the sense that looking back I feel that there were times when I wanted to influence people. Having felt the influence of Osho, I wanted to introduce many people to his thought and so on. There were people who were not willing, who were not ready, and I would sort of force myself on them. I was terribly frustrated when I found that they were not only not interested, but

that they were running away!

It was then that I realized the importance of just being available when they want, and also the futility of trying to force anything on others.

Maneesha: Do you feel now that you grasp the significance of who Osho is–that he is a master of master?

Ajit: Yes. I don't think that there's anyone on the face of the earth who could be as useful as he for the people who really want to take help. Seeing people not being with him I feel that they are missing much.

Maneesha: Do you feel that what's happening here, what Osho is doing, or initiating, is something that can have worldwide repercussions?

Ajit; That is the reason why I tried to tell you if the message that he is trying to convey can be grasped on a very wide scale–instead of thousands, maybe lakhs of people taking sannyas–maybe they will not attain the ultimate right now, but something may spark in their lives, and maybe after many many years it will have a real influence.

This I have said many many places because combining sannyas with family life, combining sannyas with one's professional commitment, was something absolutely unheard of. Traditionally, sannyas and the worldly life have been absolutely water-tight compartments to the extent that anyone who wants to take sannyas is expected to abandon family, profession, everything! And one who Is attending to the worldly life is expected never to think about sannyas.

That was the main reason their was so much opposition to my taking sannyas–because it was immediately interpreted that I was renouncing the family, the profession and everything. And I could gather courage to take sannyas only when I realised that after being initiated by Osho I wouldn't have to leave anything. It was only when I was deeply convinced about it that I jumped in.

And I think this is the contribution of Osho–that he doesn't ask you to leave anything. Here is one person who says, "You can have your cake and eat it too!"

I don't think anyone has ever tried that before–and it has been a truth in my life that I could have the cake and eat it to.

I think that is the necessity of the world at present, and wherever I have gone for talks in many places in Maharashtra, this is what has impressed people the most. Because many times they have asked me the same question, "How is it that a professional man like you, at the top of his profession–because I had been a professor and a practitioner for about 20 years with money and fame and everything that the common man aspires to–how is it that you have suddenly changed and become a sannyasin?"

But when I tell them I am with my family, and I am working in the hospital and everything is as it was and still there is something that has happened, that is what really makes them understand that it has some effect.

Their is tremendous opposition to Osho; partly because traditionally sannyas has been associated with renunciation. They have a measure of how a sannyasin should behave, and what they see here is the sannyasins–men and women–mixing and exposing parts of their bodies. To that they have a terrible aversion. They feel that Osho is corrupting sannyas by initiating everyone and anyone and that he is bringing sannyas down to a very low level.

But what they don't realize is that Osho is actually lifting the common man up to sannyas. It's not that sannyas is being brought down; rather that sannyas is being brought down *as a vehicle* to take the common man up to where sannyas belongs.

Maneesha: Is it common in India for most families to have a guru?

Ajit: Yes, almost every family has, but that guru is usually a traditional one, a family priest so to say. Their are really umpteen numbers of

sects and sub-sects-so many in fact that you cant even keep count of them. But none of them have anything glowing inside….ordinary people who are after the same things. They are as greedy, they get as angry, and have as many worldly things about them, so why should I regard them as something beyond or spiritual?

Maneesha: So it's one thing to have a guru and just pay homage to him, and quite another to go to a living guru and to take sannyas?

Ajit: I hadn't ever realized that their could be anything like a living guru until I found that in Osho.

The common Idea of a guru in India has been something like a mediator between you and god. He would just interpret some of the scriptures, tell you some stories about the other world. He would give you certain rituals to do, with an ulterior motive-that if you do this and this, you will get that and that.

Maneesha: So the word "guru" doesn't mean an enlightened one? It means a teacher or an advisor in a certain tradition?

Ajit: I don't think many in India have really understood the meaning of the word "guru" at all. What I have been experiencing is that a guru is just a door to the vast emptiness beyond a gurudwara. But one wouldn't even understand the significance of it unless one is with a living master.

Maneesha: I've heard It said that Osho has raised the Hindi language or has transformed it completely through his use of it. Do you have any comments?

Ajit: Yes. Hindi is not my mother tongue and I hardly understood any Hindi previously, but when I heard him talk in Hindi it was so simple that I didn't even feel that he was speaking in Hindi. It appeared as if he was speaking in Marathi. Usually the Hindi that great orators speak is very difficult to follow. It is very flowery, and the ways it flows is very poetic. It is very fluent.

His Hindi is extremely fluent and the most poetic expression that I have ever heard. And that is the feeling with practically everyone who has even heard a single talk .People say that just listening to his voice is a tremendous experience. If one could experience the truths that he is expounding, that is a different matter, but even the talk itself has a magnetic appeal of its own.

Maneesha: so even people who have been brought up to speak Hindi find his use of it really beautiful?

Ajit: Beautiful. And the beauty of it is…I don't know if one could really analyse it, but if an analysis could be done, the beauty is that the simplest of words and terms are used, and the significance and meaning that he brings to each word-ordinary words-is something phenomenal. Just as in English, so in Hindi, he never uses bombastic words, never uses traditional jargon.

But whether English or Hindi, his words on losing their hold on me. It is what he is conveying between the words-the silence-that is more meaningful. Once *that* is experienced his words, his voice just mingle with the vast silence that surrounds you. Then you are part of it-then it is not separate from you. His words take you beyond all words-to where you are!

Then you are in this world and not of it. That is where he leads you-if you are ready! Then one can be in the family, in the profession in the society, in the bazaars, deeply involved in *this* world, and yet not lose *that*. *Then* only his message is truly understood that ***This Is That***!

